



Engraved from a sketch by J. H. Cunningham.
OBERLIN'S RESIDENCE AT WALDBACH. *W. Childs Lith.*

THE LIFE

OF

JOHN FREDERIC OBERLIN,

PASTOR OF WALDBACH,

IN THE BAN DE LA ROCHE.

COMPILED FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND REVISED
BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

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Spec coll

Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit:

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the twenty-first day of June, in the fifty-fourth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1830, PAUL BECK, jun. Treasurer in trust of the American Sunday School Union, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

The life of John Frederic Oberlin, Pastor of Waldbach, in the Ban de la Roche. Compiled for the American Sunday School Union, and revised by the Committee of Publication.

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned"—and also to the Act, entitled, "An Act Supplementary to an Act entitled, 'An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

D. CALDWELL,

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THE LIFE
OF
JOHN FREDERIC OBERLIN.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE we give any account of the excellent man who is to be the subject of this book, it will be well to say something of the country in which he was so useful, and its condition when he took up his abode there.

The Ban de la Roche takes its name from a castle called *La Roche*, or the Rock, around which the Ban, or district, extends. It is also known by the German name of *Steinthal*, which signifies *the valley of stone*. It is a mountainous region in the north-east of France, consisting of two parishes; of which one is called Rothau; the other comprises five hamlets, one of which is Waldbach.

The latter village, at which Oberlin resided, is situated on a mountain, at the height of 1800 feet. In consequence of the different elevations of the several villages of the district, there is great variety in the temperature; the tops of the mountains being sometimes intensely cold, when the valleys are delightful as spring. There is, of course, a great difference also in the productiveness of the soil, and in the time in which the harvests are ripe for gathering. The winter generally commences in September, and the snow remains without melting until the next May or June. In some of the highest parts there is so little chance for any thing to grow, that it is said the wife can carry home in her apron all the hay her husband has mown in a long morning. The whole district contains only about 9000 acres, one third of which is covered with wood. In the 17th century it had been so laid waste by the wars which were carried on in this part of France, that the few families who resided in it were reduced to a wretched state, there being no roads from one place to another, and but little land cultivated. In one respect, how-

ever, they were happier than many of the other French provinces; they were not disturbed in the enjoyment of their religion, as Protestants, when the Roman Catholics persecuted their brethren in other parts of the empire.

In 1750 the first attempt was made to improve the moral and social condition of these almost unknown people. In that year a Lutheran minister, named Stouber, was compassionate enough to leave Germany, and settle among them. They, indeed, had what they called schools: but the following anecdote of what occurred to Mr. Stouber on his arrival, will show that they could serve no useful purpose. Desiring to be shown the principal school-house, he was conducted into a miserable cottage, where a number of children were crowded together without any occupation, and in so wild and noisy a state, that it was with some difficulty he could gain any reply to his inquiries for the master.

"There he is," said one of them, as soon as silence could be obtained, pointing to a withered old man, who lay on a little bed in one corner of the apartment.

"Are you the schoolmaster, my good friend?" inquired Stouber.

"Yes, Sir."

"And what do you teach the children?"

"Nothing, Sir."

"Nothing!—how is that?"

"Because," replied the old man, with characteristic simplicity, "I know nothing myself."

"Why then were you instituted schoolmaster?"

"Why, Sir, I had been taking care of the Waldbach pigs for a great number of years, and when I got too old and infirm for that employment, they sent me here to take care of the children."

The schools in the other villages were of a similar description; for, if the schoolmasters were not swine-herds, they were shepherds, who, in the summer, followed their flocks over the mountains, and during the winter months imparted to their little pupils the knowledge they possessed. This, however, was so trifling, that many of them were scarcely able to read, and very few could write at all. A total want of method in

teaching, and of elementary books, also raised additional hindrances to the learners. If shown the commencement of a chapter in the Bible, it is reported of them that they could seldom find the end of the preceding chapter, and that even the most accomplished of the masters found it difficult to collect the sense of what he was reading.

Stouber's first step, therefore, was to procure some schoolmasters, willing and competent to discharge the duties of their station. This was no easy task, for the office had sunk into contempt, and the more respectable of the inhabitants would on no account allow their sons to embrace it. The pastor's ingenuity, however, soon contrived to overcome this difficulty. He changed the name of the office, and the objection no longer existed. "Well then," said he, "let us have no schoolmasters, since that would not become people of your situation in life; but allow me to select the most promising of our young men, and to make them *superintendents* of the schools." To this they readily acceded. His next business was to arrange a regular alphabet, and draw up a series of spelling and

reading lessons for their use, which were printed at the expense of a benevolent individual of Strasburg, who also presented Stouber with about three hundred and fifty dollars, that he might encourage those schoolmasters whose pupils made the most rapid progress, by giving them the interest of it annually, in addition to their salaries, which were necessarily very small.

The next want to be supplied was that of a school-house, and for this purpose Stouber begged that the necessary timber might be gratuitously furnished from the surrounding forests, a privilege which the inhabitants of Steinthal generally had it in their power to bestow. The following anecdote shows the persevering character of this remarkable man. In the bad state of the woods at this period, the royal Prætor of Strasburg found an excuse for refusing the humble request for wood to build a school-house.—“But your Excellency,” said Stouber, after having for a long time solicited in vain, “your Excellency will allow me to make a private collection among charitable individuals towards the erection of our new building?” This re-

quest was immediately granted. "Well then," continued the pastor, presenting his hat, "you are, please your Excellency, known as a charitable person, and I will make the beginning with you." On hearing these words, the Prætor quickly forgot all the objections he had just been adducing, and gave him liberty to cut down as much wood as he pleased, under the express condition that he should dine with him every time he visited Strasburg.

Having thus happily succeeded in procuring materials, a small building, or rather a log hut, was constructed under Stouber's direction and superintendence; but as he had found obstacles in the worldliness of the governor, so now he had to contend with the ignorance and prejudices of the people. They still opposed themselves to his benevolent efforts; for as schoolmasters had always hitherto been hired, like labourers, at the lowest price, the cheapest were regarded as the best, and the peasants began to fear that if an increase of knowledge were required from their candidates, there would be a proportionate increase of expense. Nor was this

all; for on seeing the unconnected syllables which were proposed as lessons for the scholars, they were at a loss to comprehend their meaning, and for a long time opposed their introduction from the idea of some concealed mystery.

On perceiving, however, in the course of a few months, that, by means of the new spelling-book, little children were enabled to read any book that was put into their hands, their elder brothers and sisters, and even the parents themselves, astonished at the rapid progress they were making, and ashamed to remain behind, came forward, and begged to be instructed also. A system of regular instruction for adults, during part of the Sunday, and the long evenings of winter, was consequently established, in addition to the other schools.

The first book he gave them to read was the Bible, of which they knew nothing but by report. He could obtain but fifty copies for them, and therefore divided each into three parts, that there might be a hundred and fifty portions in use. He explained the scriptures to them in his sermons, and at their houses,

and directed their attention particularly to the great truths of the atonement of Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. In these services Stouber spent about seventeen years, when he was called to be pastor of a church in Strasburg, in Germany, which was not very distant. As soon as he resolved to accept the call, he fixed upon Oberlin as a suitable person to succeed him in the care of the parishes of the Ban de la Roche.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN FREDERIC OBERLIN was born at Strasburg, on the 31st August, 1740, and from his childhood was remarkable for the benevolence and gentleness of his disposition. Several anecdotes are told of the amiableness of his character in early life. We shall relate a few.

His father, though poor, was in the habit of giving each of his children, every Saturday, a coin, about the value of a cent, to spend as they chose. Little Frederic saved his in a box, and made very good use of it. When the tailor's or shoemaker's bill was brought home on a Saturday night, he used to watch his father's countenance, and if he imagined from its expression, that he had not money enough to pay the whole amount, he would empty his stock into the hands of his parent.

As he was one day crossing the market-place, he saw some rude boys knock down a basket of eggs, which a countrywoman was carrying on her head. The woman was in

great trouble, when Frederic not only rebuked the boys, but ran home for his box, which was nearly full of his savings, and gave the woman all that he had in it.—Another time, he saw a poor infirm woman in a shop, trying in vain to get some article at a few cents less than was asked, as she had not money enough to pay for it. Frederic waited until she had turned away to leave the shop disappointed, when he put the sum she wanted into the merchant's hand, whispered to him to call back the woman, and then ran away, before she had time to thank him.

At another time, he saw a public officer ill-using a sick beggar in the street, and with great boldness undertook to reprove the officer for his cruelty, and stepped between him and the beggar. The officer was going to seize him, but the neighbours, with whom he was a great favourite, prevented it. A few days afterwards, he happened to be walking in a narrow lane, when he saw the same officer at a distance, coming towards him. "Shall I run away?" was his first thought. "No: God is with me. I relieved the poor man, and why should I fear?" He accord-

ingly went on, and the officer passed by, smiling, without further noticing him.

These early feelings of kindness were encouraged by the wise instruction and good example of his parents. To his pious mother he often acknowledged himself indebted for his love of the "things that are excellent," and for the desires he afterwards felt to be the instrument of doing good. She brought up her children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." She assembled them together every evening, and read aloud some instructive book, whilst they sat round the table, copying pictures which their father had drawn for them; and scarcely a night passed, but when they were about to separate, they asked for "one beautiful hymn from dear mamma." The hymn was followed by a prayer; and thus were they led to him who said, "suffer little children to come unto me."

The father used to teach his seven sons the military exercises, of which Frederic became very fond, but gave them up when required to attend to his studies; as his father did not wish him to become a soldier. It appears that he was from his very infancy

the subject of convictions of sin, and of emotions of love to his heavenly Father, and the frequent prayer of his childhood was, "speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. Oh God! teach me to do thy will."

He entered the University as a theological student, and whilst there, heard a minister, who was remarkable for the earnestness with which he preached a crucified Saviour. His attendance on his ministry had a great effect on his mind, and at the age of twenty he made a solemn devotion of himself, by a written covenant, to the service of God. Although this paper is nearly similar to the form recommended to the young convert by Dr. Doddridge, yet we suppose it may be read with profit by every one.

A Solemn Act of Self-Dedication to God.

"Eternal and infinitely holy God! Under a feeling of deep humility and heart-felt contrition, I earnestly desire to present myself before thee. I well know how unworthy such a sinful worm is to appear before thy divine Majesty, before the King of kings and Lord of lords, more especially on such an occasion

as this, even to enter into a covenant transaction with thee.

“But the scheme and plan, O Father of mercies, is thine own ; thou hast, in infinite condescension, offered it me by thy Son. Thy grace hath inclined my heart to accept of it. I come, therefore, to thee, acknowledging my numerous transgressions ; and, with the repentant publican, strike my breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner.’ I come, because I have been invited by the name of thy Son, and I rely entirely upon his perfect righteousness. Be pleased, I entreat thee, for his sake, to pardon my ingratitude, and no more remember my sins. Be reconciled, I beseech thee, to thy disobedient creature, who is now convinced of thy right to him, and desires nothing so much as to belong to thee. Holy God ! I this day surrender myself to thee, in the most solemn manner. ‘Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth.’ I this day acknowledge the Lord is my God ! I this day declare myself to be of the number of his children, and that I make one of his people. Hear my words, O my God, and write in thy book that I hence-

forth devote myself entirely to thee. In the name of the Lord God of hosts, I this day renounce all former lords that have had dominion over me ; the joys of the world, in which I have too much delighted, and all carnal desires. I renounce all perishable things, in order that my God may constitute my All. I consecrate to thee all that I am, and all that I have ; the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my fortune and my time. Grant me grace, O Father of mercies, to employ all to thy glory, and to live in obedience to thy commands ; with an ardent and humble desire to continue thine throughout the endless ages of a happy eternity. Shouldst thou be pleased to make me, in this life, the instrument of leading others to thee, give me strength and courage openly to declare thy name. Enable me not only to devote myself to thy service, but to persuade my brethren to dedicate themselves to it also.

“Grant that through the assistance of thy Holy Spirit, I may be supported in life, and kept faithful unto death. Enable me, during the rest of my days, to acquire that of which

I stand most in need, and to amend my ways. May the things of time no longer exercise dominion over me; but may I, during the short remainder of my life, live solely to thee. Grant me grace, not only to tread in the path which, I am convinced, is the best; but enable me also to be always most active in walking in it. I resign myself, and all I am and have, to thy direction, to be disposed of in whatever manner thine infinite wisdom shall see good. I leave the management of all events to thee, and say, without restriction, "Thy will, not mine, be done!" Employ me, O Lord, as an instrument consecrated to thy service. Look upon me, as constituting one of thy flock. Wash me in the blood of thy beloved Son. Clothe me with his righteousness. Sanctify me by his Spirit. Transform me more and more into his image. Impart to me, through him, all needful influences of thy purifying, cheering, and comforting Spirit; and grant that my life may be passed under the habitual sense of thy presence, O my Father, and my God! And, after having endeavoured to obey thee, and to do thy will on earth, take me hence

at what time, and in what manner, thou shalt see good. When the solemn hour of death approaches, and I stand on the verge of eternity, grant that I may remember this covenant, and employ my latest breath in thy service. And be pleased, O Lord, when thou seest the anguish I may have to endure in my last moments, and when I may not, perhaps, have sufficient strength to recall it, to remember it too. Then, O my heavenly Father, look down with pity on thy feeble child, and enable him to struggle with death. I wish not to prescribe to thee, O my Father, in what manner thou oughtest to take me to thyself. I wish not to ask thee to preserve me from agonizing pain. No ; nothing of that kind shall form the object of my prayers. What I earnestly entreat, in the name of Jesus, is, to be enabled to glorify thee in the last hours of my life, and to evidence, in the midst of whatever sufferings thy all-wise Providence may see meet to afflict me with, patience and submission to thy holy will. Strengthen my soul ; give it confidence, when thou shalt call it hence ; and receive it to the embraces of thine everlasting love. Admit

it into the mansions of them that sleep in Jesus—into the mansions where indescribable joys will be its portion for ever. There permit it peacefully and joyfully to await the accomplishment of the promise thou hast made to all thy people—even that of a glorious resurrection, and of eternal happiness in thine heavenly presence.

“And when I am gone to the grave, if these pages should fall into the hands of any of my surviving friends, oh grant that their hearts may be sensibly affected; grant them grace not only to read them as the expression of my own sentiments, but to feel for themselves also, what I have expressed. Teach them to fear thee, O Lord my God, and to seek refuge with me, under the shadow of thy wings, through time and through eternity; that they may partake in all the blessings of thy covenant, through Jesus Christ, the great Mediator. To him, and to Thee, O Father, and to the Holy Spirit, be everlasting praises ascribed by the millions of redeemed spirits, and by all those other celestial beings, in whose work and blessedness thou shalt call them to share.

“My God, and the God of my fathers! Thou who keepest thy covenant, and who scatterest thy blessings to a thousand generations, I humbly supplicate thee, since thou knowest that ‘the heart of man is deceitful,’ to vouchsafe to me grace to enter into this engagement with all sincerity of heart, and to remain faithful to my baptismal covenant. May the name of the Lord be an eternal testimony, that I have signed this covenant transaction, in the steadfast and earnest desire of keeping it.

“JOHN FREDERIC OBERLIN.

“*Strasburg, the 1st of January, 1760.*

“*Renewed at Waldbach, the 1st of January, 1770.*”

When his studies were finished, he was ordained a minister, but did not, for seven years, undertake any particular charge in that character; employing himself as a private tutor in the family of a physician, where he learned much of the art of medicine, that was very useful to him in his future life.

In the year 1766, an appointment to be chaplain in the French army was offered to him, which he determined to accept, and commenced reading to prepare himself for

the situation. It was while thus engaged, that Stouber came to beg him to take his place in the Ban de la Roche. He found him in a little room, up three pair of stairs, with scarcely any furniture, and living in the greatest simplicity; being in the habit of dining at his father's, and bringing thence a piece of bread which served him for supper. He accepted Mr. Stouber's invitation, and removed to Waldbach on the 30th March, 1767, being then in the 27th year of his age. The picture in front of this book is a representation of the house in which he lived and died.

CHAPTER III.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great improvements which the care of Mr. Stouber had made in the condition of the people, Oberlin found them to be still far from a state of complete civilization. Their language was barbarous; they were shut up in their mountainous abode by the want of roads; the farmers were destitute of the most necessary implements, and the quantity of provisions they raised was not sufficient for the wants of the population. He at once resolved, as the best means of preparing the way for his religious instructions as a pastor, to teach them the common arts and comforts of life. To these efforts a part of the people made opposition, because they required more labour and application than they had been accustomed to employ; for it is hard to persuade persons who have long indulged in idleness, that their happiness can be increased, and that new comforts can be procured by exertion. Some of the worst among them went so far as to form a plot to lie in wait for the minister, and beat him. He received

information of their design, and of the time when it was to be executed, which was the sabbath. On that day he preached as usual, taking his text from Matthew v. 39. "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also;" and taught his hearers the duty of Christian patience and of submission to injuries. After the sermon, the conspirators assembled, and were amusing themselves in conjecturing how their pastor would act, when they brought the principles of his sermon to the trial, as they intended to do; when, to their astonishment, he entered the apartment where they were met. "Here am I, my friends," he said with calmness. "I am acquainted with your design. You have wished to chastise me, because you think I deserve it. If I have broken the rules which I have laid down for you, punish me. It is better that I should deliver myself into your hands, than that you should be guilty of the meanness of lying in wait for me." This simple address produced the intended effect. The peasants, full of shame, begged his forgiveness, and promised

never to oppose his affectionate measures for their good.

A few weeks afterwards, a plot was formed in another of the villages, to seize him as he left the place of worship, and injure him ; of which he also had notice. On this occasion he preached on the security of those who put their trust in the Lord, and of the protection which he affords to his servants. After the sermon, proceeding on his way home as usual, he perceived the plotters partly concealed in the hedge, and awaiting his approach. He passed directly on before them, and they were so confounded that they did not attempt to stop him. These occurrences are believed to have had a good effect in promoting his plans of reform ; for those who had been detected in their evil designs, were so anxious to show the sincerity of their repentance, that they became the foremost of his assistants.

In 1768, Oberlin was married to a young lady of Strasburg. She possessed a sound and cultivated understanding, and had been well educated in religious principles. She became an invaluable help to her husband by her prudence, judgment, and christian firmness.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE of the first objects of the pastor's care in regard to the improvement of the worldly condition of his people, was to open roads, by means of which they could visit, and be visited by, the inhabitants of the neighbouring places. Having assembled the people, he proposed to them that they should blast the rocks with which the country abounded, and with the fragments build a wall along the road to prevent the falling of stones and earth, which filled up the paths, and made them impassable. This work was to be a mile and a half long, and a bridge was then to be built across a river which they had hitherto been compelled to walk through, whenever they had occasion to pass beyond it. The peasants were astonished at the proposition. The execution of the object appeared impossible, and they all began to make excuses to avoid joining in the labour. Oberlin tried to convince them of the advantages they would enjoy when the work was finished: he told them that

then they could carry the produce of their labour abroad, and exchange them for articles of which they stood in need ; that instead of being confined in their villages nine months in the year, by the state of the roads, or rather paths, they could go abroad at all seasons. He concluded with saying, "let all who feel the importance of my proposition, come and work with me." Thus saying, he took up a pick-axe and proceeded to the spot, knowing that example is, in most cases, more forcible than arguments. The people, at this sight, forgot their excuses, and joined him, with their tools. He assigned a particular spot to each individual, choosing the most difficult places for himself. Encouraged by the vigour with which their minister laboured, the work proceeded fast. More tools were wanting than the district could afford, but this deficiency was supplied by his friends in Germany. The whole population that were able, assisted in the work : walls were built to support the earth which seemed ready to fall ; mountain torrents, which had before overflowed the meadows, were turned into channels, which carried them off ; in

short, such was the diligence employed, that by the year 1770, a communication was opened with Strasburg, by means of the road, and a neat wooden bridge over the river, which is still called *the Bridge of Charity*. When this work, which the peasants at first thought so impossible, was accomplished, they were easily persuaded to open roads by which all the five villages could easily communicate with each other: the good pastor still working harder than the rest, but not neglecting to instruct them every Sabbath, in the duties and doctrines of religion.

One of the next wants that he found it necessary to supply, was a depository in the valley for agricultural implements; for whenever any of them happened to get out of repair, two days were lost in procuring others from Strasburg, and the peasants had not always money enough to buy. To remedy this, he filled a warehouse in Waldbach with a large stock, from which he supplied those who stood in need, giving them credit until they could pay. He established a lending fund, to assist those who were in want of money. He also introduced trades, for there

were no masons or blacksmiths among them. Oberlin, therefore, chose several of the elder boys, and sent them to Strasburg to learn the trades most necessary for the wants of the people. By this means good workmen were procured, who, in turn, taught others; and thus, too, they kept in circulation among themselves, the money which had before been sent out to other places. Their dwellings were also improved. They were generally wretched cabins, hewn out of the rocks, or sunk into the sides of the mountains, and without cellars deep enough to preserve their potatoes, which was their principal food. In the place of these hovels, were gradually introduced comfortable cottages, with good cellars.

The peasants showed a particular reluctance to engage in the diligent cultivation of their land. Instead of insisting upon their compliance with his advice, Oberlin determined to set before them the practical proofs of its wisdom. There were two gardens belonging to his house, which were constantly passed by the people. Here, with the assistance of a favourite servant, he set

about improving his own spot. He surrounded the young trees, already planted, with richer soil, and planted a variety of fruit trees in ground which was well known to be very poor. By his well-directed labour they flourished rapidly ; and as the peasants passed through the gardens in going to their daily work, they could not help stopping to observe the surprising contrast between the scanty supply of their own, and the rich produce of their pastor's land ; and at length they repaired to him, anxiously inquiring how such fine trees could grow in such a soil. Oberlin, according to his usual method of deriving instruction from every incident, first directed their thoughts to Him who "causeth the earth to bring forth her bud," and who "crowneth the year with his goodness ;" and then proceeded to explain the method, by which, under Providence, they might have the same success. The taste for planting trees was thus diffused. The very face of the country, in consequence, was completely changed : the cottages, which were before bare and desolate, were surrounded by neat little orchards and gardens, and in the place

of poverty and misery, the villages and their inhabitants assumed an air of rural happiness.

So barbarous had been the state of agriculture in the Ban de la Roche, that the old men remembered to have heard from their fathers, that before the year 1709, the inhabitants lived chiefly upon wild apples and pears; but a famine which visited them in that year, induced them to clear away some of the forests, and plant a sort of potatoes. But even these had been so much neglected, that when Oberlin settled there, the crops had diminished to one fourth of their former quantity. He taught them the method of improving the soil, obtained the best seed for planting, and in a short time the district became famous for its excellent potatoes, which are to this day the great production of the place. Besides potatoes, he introduced the culture of several kinds of vegetables. After teaching them various arts connected with agriculture, of which they had no knowledge or idea before, he at length, in 1778, instituted an agricultural society, which, besides furnishing books and instruction on the subject, established prizes for the farmers who

should raise the best cattle and fruit. This excited them to more industry and attention, and the result of his labours was like that spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, when he said, "the desert shall blossom as the rose."

CHAPTER V.

BUT Oberlin did not devote all his attention to the temporal concerns of his people. He did not forget that his chief duty was to promote their spiritual knowledge and improvement, and he missed no opportunity of correcting their errors, admonishing them of their duty to their Creator, and of their sinfulness, and the duty of repentance. His attentions to the young were particularly interesting. He was so convinced that his heavenly Father would smile upon his exertions to benefit the children of his charge, that he undertook to erect school-houses, relying upon Providence that means would be found to pay the expense. All his efforts were accompanied with fervent prayers for their success, and he had the firmest faith in the promises of God. His confidence was not disappointed. He found help in various quarters, so that he had the satisfaction to see a school-house built in each of the five villages, and the inhabitants, of their own accord, offering to support them. He was

careful to educate suitable persons as teachers in these schools; but observing that whilst their elder brothers and sisters were studying for this purpose, the younger children suffered a great loss of time, he established *Infant Schools*, which were probably the first ever known. With the assistance of his wife, he appointed female teachers for each village, where the children were collected and taught in the same manner that is now followed in our infant schools. Two women were employed in each school, one to teach them to spin, knit and sew, the other to direct their lessons and amusements. When the little scholars became tired of working, the mistress showed them pictures relating to Bible subjects, or natural history, which she would explain to them, and then examine how well they remembered what she had told them. They were also taught geography, by the use of the maps, and to sing hymns. And as the language spoken by the people was very incorrect and barbarous—a mixture of French and German—the children were instructed to speak good French. When they had passed through these schools,

they entered the public schools, where they were taught higher branches.

They had also *Sunday Schools*. Every Sunday, the children of one of the villages assembled at the church, where they sung the hymns that they had practised during the week, and recited the Bible lessons they had learned. After this, Oberlin conversed with them, and instructed them in the duties of religion. On one day every week, all the scholars were assembled at Waldbach, where they were examined in their studies, and received the advice of the pastor, whom they called by the affectionate name of their *Dear Papa*. He had books prepared and printed for them, which were either given as prizes, or lent for a certain time to read, as is done with our Sunday-school libraries. Every thing he prepared for them was intended to improve their hearts, as well as their minds. Even in an Almanack which he made, he directed them thus: "if it proves of any real benefit to you, or affords you a moment's gratification, look up to your heavenly Father, and say, 'thy goodness, O Lord, has crowned me with blessings. Permit me to

thank thee for them : and do thou strengthen, by whatever means it may please thee to employ, the feeble faith of thy too feeble child."

Oberlin knew how to blend amusement with instruction, in the wisest manner ; and whilst his principal object was to ground the youth in the principles of Christian faith, he also diffused among them the taste for agricultural life, which, in their situation, was so necessary. The children of twelve or fifteen years of age were required to read on the subject ; they were taught the names and properties of plants, and encouraged to bring them from the woods, and cultivate them in gardens. They were also taught to draw the flowers, in which art some of them became very skilful. One of these drawings has been seen, representing a garland of flowers, beautifully painted by a poor little boy, in the centre of which is neatly written,

"Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."—*Isa.* lxii. 3.

And underneath are these words,

"Will you, Mr. Legrand, accept this slight token of sincere gratitude, from your humble and dutiful scholar,

"GUSTAVUS SCHEIDECKER."

The children were accustomed to present wreaths of flowers to their benefactors.— Upon one of the occasions on which this amiable offering was made to Oberlin, he wrote this letter :

“ Waldbach, September 16th, 1810.

“ My dear Scholars,

“ I am very sensible of the honour you have intended me, in sending your garlands as a token of your remembrance of my 70th birth-day, completed the 31st of last August. You seem, however, to have forgotten, that an honour which one is conscious of not deserving, is in itself humiliating and abasing. If, by my feeble exertions, I have been enabled to be of some utility to you, all the honour belongs to God, who has kindled in my heart the love I bear you, and who has given and preserved my strength till this period, to carry forward my heart's desire, which is your good.

“ The beautiful flowers with which your great Creator adorned our country, gave you the means of presenting me with this testimony of your united love. These flowers

will very soon fade, but the impression they have made on my heart will never die, and I earnestly pray that you may become unfading flowers in the Paradise of God.

“May he bless you, and may he bless the persons who labour for your instruction, with perseverance and faithfulness, that you may prosper, and become useful in the service of our dear and beloved Saviour.

“But I have still one wish—a wish that though I am *old* in years is always *fresh* in my heart—a wish that reigns predominant in my thoughts and never forsakes me. It is that my parish might make one solemn feast before God, a general and universal dedication, and one in which all persons without distinction might partake, every one according to his respective ability. That is, a dedication of the heart, in honour and remembrance of, and in faith in Him, who shed his blood for us in Gethsemane, and permitted himself to be smitten, scourged, and spit upon, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross, that we might receive the heaven which our sins had forfeited.—This is the dedication that I so much desire every soul

in my parish might join together to make—even the surrender of himself to Jesus, each one as he is, with all his faults, with all his sins, in order to find in Him, pardon, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

“Your affectionate Papa,

“JOHN FREDERIC OBERLIN.”

To impress on their minds the duty of doing something towards the prosperity of the place, they were required, at a certain age, to plant at least two trees; and even this they were taught to do with a view to their duty to their Maker. Oberlin always regarded himself as merely the instrument of God, and often said, “I have little merit in the good I have done; I have only obeyed the will of God. He has been graciously pleased to manifest his intentions to me, and has always given me the means of executing them.”

CHAPTER VI.

IN 1782, Oberlin established an association for the religious improvement of the people, which he called "The Christian Society." He drew up a number of mottoes, rules, and topics, to be thought of and remembered by the members. Some of these were as follows :

"We are all one in Christ Jesus."

"Abide in me."

"Christ is all, and in all."

"Bring forth much fruit."

"Love not the world, neither the things of the world."

"Search the Scriptures diligently."

"Lose no time."

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love."

"Provoke unto love and to good works."

"Nourish the inner man by, 1. The word of God. 2. Continual prayer. 3. The Holy Sacrament."

"Not only the Superintendents, but also all the members, ought to watch over each other for good ; to exhort, and to warn each other

with sweetness, charity, humility, and patience. Allow of no idleness or negligence on the part of those confided to your care. Endeavour to promote the happiness of all. Appropriate part of your earnings, at stated intervals, to the public good."

The Society seems to have been established for the purposes of prayer and religious conversation, and had more than one hundred and thirty members. Their meetings were public. It was violently opposed, by those who found no pleasure in the spiritual exercises which it encouraged, and Oberlin, supposing that its continuance might destroy the influence which the intercourse of the religious and irreligious might otherwise produce, thought it necessary to dissolve the Society, after it had existed a year and a half. On this occasion he delivered an address from the words in the intercessory prayer of our Saviour, John xvii. 20, 21. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

In this address he said to them, that he had in a great measure attained his end, both as to those who had become members, and those who had not. As to the former, he said, (and the same is true of all prayer-meetings:)

“1. They have had the opportunity of declaring themselves on the side of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and of acknowledging him; which is a thing of no little importance, if we recollect that passage, (Matt. x. 32,) “Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven.

“2. They have learned to know more of their spiritual wants; and how necessary it is for them to be found in Christ Jesus, without spot, and blameless; ‘rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith.’

“3. They have felt, more than ever, the duty and necessity of prayer. Many, previous to the formation of this society, had not even an idea of that continual prayer of the heart, which Jesus Christ recommends to his disciples. Luke xviii.

“4. They have been led to feel that many

souls are anxious for their salvation. They know, now, where to seek the friends of God, and of Jesus Christ, in order to enjoy the edification and benefit of Christian communion.

“5. They have learned to be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven them.”

With respect to those who had not been members he said:

“A number of precious souls have been awakened from their sleep, and have been induced to pay more attention to their spiritual necessities; have been led to look upon themselves as sinners; have learned to tremble for their salvation; and have become ‘instant in prayer.’

“I cannot sufficiently thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the good that he has, through this society, been pleased to effect in my dear parish, and for the evident blessing that has rested upon it. May he watch over it, and grant that the good fruits brought forth, may be perfected, and rendered permanent. May the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ be promoted and ex-

tended, by any other means that he may see fit to appoint. May he sustain his church according to his promise, (Matt. xvi. 18,) so that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' May he, who said to his disciples, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me,' register all its members in his Book of Life. May he abundantly shed his Holy Spirit upon them, and 'grave them upon the palms of his hands,' so that no one may be able to draw them away, or to turn them from him. May he protect them, sanctify them, purify them, and prepare them for their heavenly inheritance.

"I thank God also, for all those who have shown themselves friends to this society. May he reward you for the joy which you have thus imparted to your distressed and afflicted pastor. May he bring you nearer and nearer to Jesus. May you become of the number of his own dear people, a people zealous of good works, the sheep of his beloved little flock.

"I thank those who have permitted their wives and children to belong to it, and to declare themselves openly. May God recompense them for all that they have done 'unto

the least of my brethren.' May he recompense them also richly and eternally, for the good which they have done to their wives and children, in permitting them to participate in the contempt which Jesus Christ suffered; to bear his cross, and to become partakers in the promises which our Lord has made to those who confess his name before men.

"O, my dear hearers! leave, leave, I entreat you, the ways of Belial. Devote yourselves to the Lord Jesus. He is able and willing to receive every soul that earnestly seeks him. He will cast out none that come unto him. Hasten then to be saved. Time flies away; death draws near. 'There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, than Jesus Christ, whom I preach unto you.' Hasten to him. Fly to him. Pray, mourn, weep; seek after him in the secret of your hearts, until you find him. Amen."

It was one of the rules of this society, that every member should, on the first of every month, pray for missionaries, as is now done all over the Christian world, at the monthly concert of prayer. Another rule was, that

besides 'constant watching unto prayer,' each individual should pray, every Sunday and Wednesday, at five o'clock in the afternoon, for the following objects:

"1. That every member of the society may be saved, with all his household, and belong to the Lord Jesus.

"2. Every member shall add to the list, all the friends of God, of his acquaintance, and pray for them.

"3. They shall pray for all the children of God every where, of all denominations; supplicating that they may be united more and more in Christ Jesus: that the kingdom of Satan may be destroyed, and the kingdom of God and of our Saviour may be established among the heathen, and among nominal Christians.

"4. Each member shall pray for school-masters, superiors, and magistrates; for pastors, for the male and female labourers in the vineyard of the Lord; and for the youth, that God may preserve them from the seducing influence of bad example, and lead them to the knowledge of our gracious Redeemer."

Lastly, it was required, that, every Satur-

day evening, all the members should ask God to bless the preaching of his holy word on the morrow.

When the society was dissolved, he had these extracts from the rules printed, and placed conspicuously in every cottage, that they might do good even when the society did not exist.

CHAPTER VII.

IN 1784, Oberlin suffered a most severe affliction in the death of his wife. They had been married sixteen years, and their family now consisted of seven children. Her death was unexpected, and when her affectionate husband was informed of it, he was overpowered by the stroke, so as to remain for some time in the deepest silence, and unable to give utterance to his feelings. At length, he suddenly fell on his knees, and returned thanks to God, that the object of his tenderest solicitude was now beyond the need of prayer, and that he had crowned the abundance of his mercies towards her, by giving her so easy and gentle a dismissal. Upon this occasion he wrote thus: "As in a thousand other instances in the course of my life, notwithstanding my overwhelming affliction, I was upheld, by God's gracious assistance, in a remarkable manner."—From that time the passive graces shone as conspicuously in his character, as the active virtues had done. Neither complaint nor murmur escaped his

lips. A speedy re-union with her was, nevertheless, one of his most cherished desires. "I hope," he would often say, "that the world in which God will re-unite me to my beloved wife, will soon open to me." This desire was not merely the result of his grief. "I have had all my life," he said, "a desire, occasionally a very strong one, to die; owing, in some degree, to the consciousness of my moral infirmities, and of my frequent sins. My affection for my wife and children, and my attachment to my parish, have sometimes checked this wish, though for short intervals only."

His patience and resignation not only under this, but under every other affliction that it pleased God to award to him during the whole course of his life, was striking and exemplary. After the first bitterness of grief was over, his soul always seemed "to be girding itself up," and as it were, "stretching its wings," in expectation of that joyful period when it should leave mortality behind, and soar to the regions of everlasting blessedness, to join "the innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church

of the first born." "Millions of times," he continues, in the paper mentioned above, "have I besought God to enable me to surrender myself with entire and filial submission to his will, either to live or to die:—and to bring me into such a state of resignation, as neither to wish, nor to say, nor to do, nor to undertake any thing, but what He, who only is wise and good, sees to be best."

The following extract from a letter which he wrote to a lady, who had been tried by many successive bereavements, in the hope of convincing her that such dispensations are permitted, to strengthen our graces, and to promote our spiritual refinement, will illustrate his lively faith and fervent piety, as well as the simple and original mode in which he was accustomed to pour out the language of his heart in his familiar letters.—"I have before me two stones, which are in imitation of precious stones. They are both perfectly alike in colour; they are of the same water, clear, pure, and clean; yet there is a marked difference between them, as to their lustre and brilliancy. One has a dazzling brightness, while the other is dull, so that the eye passes

over it, and derives no pleasure from the sight. What can be the reason of such a difference? It is this. The one is cut but in a few points; the other has ten times as many. These points are produced by a very violent operation; it is requisite to cut, to smooth, and polish. Had these stones been endued with life, so as to have been capable of feeling what they underwent, the one which has received eighty points would have thought itself very unhappy, and would have envied the fate of the other, which, having received but eight, had undergone but a tenth part of its sufferings. Nevertheless, the operation being over, it is done for ever: the difference between the two stones always remains strongly marked; that which has suffered but little, is entirely eclipsed by the other, which alone is held in estimation, and attracts attention. May not this serve to explain the saying of our Saviour, whose words always bear some reference to eternity: ‘Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted?’—Blessed, whether we contemplate them apart, or in comparison with those who have not passed through so

many trials. Oh! that we were always able to cast ourselves into his arms, like little children—to draw near to him, like helpless lambs, and ever to ask of him patience, resignation, an entire surrender to his will, faith, trust, and a heartfelt obedience to the commands which he gives to those who are willing to be his disciples. ‘The Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces.’ Isaiah xxv. 8.”

Upon the death of Mrs. Oberlin, the care of the household was committed to a pious orphan, named Louisa Schepler, who had lived eight years in the family. She was about twenty-three years old, and had been one of the most active conductors of the infant schools in Waldbach, from their commencement. No sooner had she accepted the station of housekeeper to the *dear Papa*, than refusing offers of marriage, she took the resolution of devoting herself to his service, and would never accept any salary, but lived in his family rather as a friend than a servant. What her few wants required she asked for—nothing more; and on some occasions, when Oberlin endeavoured, through indirect

channels, to put money into her hands, she, conjecturing the source from whence it came, uniformly returned it.

The following note, dated "Waldbach, first of the New Year, 1793," addressed by Louisa to her benefactor, is a proof of her disinterested and grateful affection.

"Dear and beloved Papa,

"Permit me, at the commencement of the new year, to request a favour which I have long desired. As I am now really independent, that is to say, as I have no longer my father nor his debts to attend to, I beseech you, dear papa, not to refuse me the favour of making me your adopted daughter. Do not, I entreat you, give me any more wages; for as you treat me like your child in every other respect, I earnestly wish you to do so in this particular also. Little is needful for the support of my body. My shoes, and stockings, and other clothes, will cost something, but when I want them I can ask you for them, as a child applies to its father.

"Oh! I entreat you, dear papa, grant me

this favour, and condescend to regard me as your most tenderly attached daughter.

“LOUISA SCHEPLER.”

The humble request was acceded to, and Louisa was ever afterwards considered as one of Oberlin's own children.

A letter which he wrote in 1811, directed to his children, and intended to be read by them after his death, shows the regard which he felt towards this exemplary woman.

“My very dear Children,

“In leaving you, I commend to your care the faithful nurse who has brought you up—the indefatigable Louisa. The services which she has performed for our family are innumerable. Your dear mamma took her under her care before she had attained the age of fifteen; but, even at that early period, she rendered herself useful by her talents, her activity, and her industry. On the premature decease of your beloved parent, she became at once your faithful nurse, your careful instructress, and your adopted mother. Her zeal for doing good extended beyond the

confines of our own family. Like a devoted servant of the Lord, she went into all the surrounding villages, where I sent her, to assemble the children together, to instruct them in God's holy will, to teach them to sing hymns, to direct their attention to the wonderful works of nature, to pray with them, and to communicate to them all the knowledge that she had herself derived from me and your mamma. This was not the labour of a moment; and the innumerable difficulties which opposed themselves to her benevolent employments would have discouraged a thousand others; for whilst on the one hand she had to contend with the wild and froward characters of the children, she had, on the other, to correct their mixed language, and, consequently, after having spoken to them in that dialect which was necessary to make herself understood, to translate all she had said into French. The bad roads and the inclement weather, so frequent on these mountains, presented another difficulty: but neither sleet, nor rain, nor wind, nor hail, nor deep snows under foot, nor snow falling from above, detained her

from her purpose ; and when she returned in the evening, though exhausted, wet, and weary, and chilled with excessive cold, she would set herself to attend to my children, and to our household affairs. In this manner she devoted not only her time and abilities, but also her health, and all her bodily powers, to my service, and to the service of our God. For many years past, indeed, her lungs have been injured, and her constitution absolutely ruined, by over fatigue, and by sudden transitions from heat to cold, and from cold to heat ; having often, when warm with walking, crossed the snows and sank into them to such a depth as to be scarcely able to get out. She received a sufficient recompense, you will perhaps say, in the ample salary I allowed her.—No, dear children, no : since the death of your dear mother, I have never been able to prevail on her to accept the least reward for her services ; she employed her own little property in doing good, and in the purchase of her scanty wardrobe ; and it was always as a favour that she received from me some slight articles of dress, and provisions, which I owed, notwithstanding, to her economy and

good management. Judge, dear children, judge of the debt you have contracted, from her services to me, and how far you will ever be from repaying it.

“In times of sickness and affliction, how kindly has she watched over both you and me; how tenderly has she sought to mitigate our pains, and assuage our griefs. Once more I commend her to you. You will evince, by the care that you take of her, how much attention you pay to the last wish of a father, who has always endeavoured to inspire you with feelings of gratitude and benevolence—but, yes—yes—you will fulfil my wishes. You will be, in your turn, both individually and collectively, all that she has been to you, as far as your means, situation, and opportunity permit.

“Adieu, my very dear children: your papa,
“J. F. OBERLIN.”

A visiter to Oberlin's dwelling-house in 1793, describes it as an interesting spot in itself. The situation was romantic, the garden and fields in beautiful cultivation, and the utmost order and neatness were seen both

within and without the house. The walls were covered with maps, drawings of insects and animals, &c. Texts of Scripture were written over all the doors; following the direction given to Israel by Moses, respecting the divine laws: "Thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house, and upon thy gates." (Deut. xi. 20.) Over the dining-room door was written,

"Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness:
for they shall be filled."

Upon the others were texts enjoining love to God, and our neighbour. The intelligence and amiable simplicity of the peasants struck every one with admiration. Oberlin and his children were constantly employed in doing something for the improvement and comfort of the people. Entire equality prevailed in his house, but all were alike respectful to the pastor.

Among his other good devices, Oberlin had thousands of texts of Scripture, and other sentences, printed, like our Sunday-school tickets, which he distributed to his people and his visitors. Verses from the Bible were to

be seen every where on his walls, and it was his study to let no opportunity pass of doing good, or impressing some useful truth.

In 1793 he was again severely afflicted by the loss of his eldest son, in the twenty-fourth year of his age; but he did not murmur, recognizing the hand of his heavenly Father in his troubles as well as in his joys.

CHAPTER VIII.

DURING the horrors of the French Revolution, when every kind of worship was forbidden, the good Oberlin was not disturbed in his peaceful parish. His house became the refuge of many persons who fled from the persecution and bloody scenes which were acted in other places. The people of the Ban, however, suffered with the rest of the kingdom by the loss of trade, and the scarcity of money. Oberlin at once announced that he should not expect them to contribute as much as they had before done to the support of himself, the schools, and the other expenses of the district; but told them they might bring what they could afford, and that if they brought nothing, he should not be displeased. He distributed their contributions with the greatest judgment and economy. He constantly taught them the duty of industry, and would hire every person he saw idle to engage in some work. Notwithstanding the poverty of its inhabitants, scarcely a beggar was ever seen in the valley, unless some one from the

neighbouring country, attracted by the well-known disposition of the pastor and his people, might come to seek their assistance. "Why do you not work?" was Oberlin's usual question.—"Because no one will employ me," was the general answer.—"Well, then I will employ you. Here; carry those planks—break those stones—fill that bucket with water—and I will pay you for your trouble."—Such was his usual way of proceeding, and idle beggars were taught to come there no more. He set the example himself, allowing no part of the day to be spent without some useful occupation. When the times of the Revolution reduced the resources of the people, he undertook the education of ten or twelve pupils, who were sent to him from abroad, and expended a great part of the money received for this service, upon his parish. He faithfully set apart three-tenths of all he received to charitable and religious uses. For this purpose he kept three boxes. The first, he said, "was a deposite for the worship of God: and I devote the contents to the building and repairing of churches and school rooms; the support of conductresses; and the

purchase of Bibles and pious books ; in short, to any thing connected with divine worship, or the extension of the knowledge of our Redeemer's kingdom." On this box he wrote texts from Leviticus xxvii. 30, and Malachi iii. 10. "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's : it is holy unto the Lord."—"Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."—The second box held his tithes "for useful purposes," such as the improvement of the roads to the churches and schools ; the schoolmaster's salary ; all works of public utility ; dinners to the poor who came on Sunday from the other villages ; the repairing of injuries, and assistance to the peasantry. The texts on this box were Deuteronomy xiv. 22—27, and xvi. 16. The third box was "for the poor," in want of fuel, clothing, or food, or whose houses were burned, or who had any other wants. On this box he wrote verses

28 and 29, of Deuteronomy xiv. and Leviticus xix. 9, 10. But this large appropriation did not satisfy his wishes, and when he heard of the establishment of a Missionary Society, to send the Gospel to the heathen, he sold all the plate he had, with the exception of a single spoon, and gave the proceeds to the society: and he bequeathed this spoon to a missionary establishment in Switzerland. He indeed had the missionary spirit himself, and in the early part of his ministry determined to come to Pennsylvania, where a large field was open for doing good, but was prevented by the war which broke out between America and England. After this design was disappointed, he would never listen to any invitation to remove to other parishes, although many were made to him from important places. He was so much affected by the accounts of the wretched condition of the slaves in the West Indies, that he determined to taste no more sugar and coffee because they were prepared by slaves; and this resolution he never broke, though it cost him great self-denial to abandon comforts which he had been accustomed to from his infancy.

When the French government made a kind of notes to pass for money, which they had not specie to redeem, every one who held the notes lost their amount, when they would no longer pass. To prevent this loss to his people, he bought from them all that they had, for their full amount, which he raised by the sale of whatever he could dispose of.

It is the injunction of an Apostle, that "whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.) The views of religion which Oberlin entertained, made him follow this rule to its greatest extent. He would take a stone out of the road, if it were likely to incommode a traveller, on the principle of love to his neighbour; and in this manner he argued and practised respecting all the duties in which mankind are engaged.

He was charitable in all his opinions and feelings, and took every opportunity of teaching the duty of kindness to our fellow-men, without distinction. One morning in the early part of his ministry, as Oberlin was at work in his study, he heard a great noise in the village. Going out, he found a crowd of

people abusing a stranger with the most threatening language. "A Jew! a Jew!" they cried out on all sides, as the pastor forced his way through them; and it was with difficulty that he could obtain silence. As soon as he could be heard, he rebuked them with warmth for having proved themselves unworthy of the name of Christians, by treating the stranger in so cruel a manner. He added, that if this poor man wanted the *name* of a Christian, they wanted the *spirit* of Christians.

Among other fruits of faith, the charity of the peasants to orphans was very striking. When a poor father or mother died, leaving a family, it was a thing of course for some poor person to offer to take the charge and care of the orphans; so that many of the households contained one or two adopted children, who were treated as their own. One female devoted herself especially to the care of orphans; and though possessing nothing more than a small piece of ground from which to procure a living, supported at one time ten destitute children.

When the British and Foreign Bible Society inquired of Oberlin how many Bibles were

wanted in his parish, he addressed them a letter, in which he gave an account of the manner in which he would distribute those that they should grant him. We make some extracts from this letter, particularly as it gives a fuller account of the excellent woman just mentioned.

“ Among the large number of individuals and families to whom a Bible is a most welcome gift, I first put down such characters as are most active in promoting the Redeemer’s kingdom, and in doing good to the bodies and souls of their fellow-creatures.

“ The first Bible shall be given to Sophia Bernard, who is one of the most excellent women I know, and, indeed, an ornament to my parish. While unmarried, she undertook, with the consent of her parents, the support and education of three helpless boys, whom their inhuman father had treated in a shocking manner, when, being nearly starved to death, they ventured to cry out for food. Soon afterwards, she proved the means of saving the lives of three Roman Catholic children, who, without her assistance, would have fallen a prey to want and famine. Thus she had

the management of six children, to whom several more were added, belonging to parents of three several denominations. She then hired a house and a servant girl, and supported the whole of her family entirely by her own work, and the little money acquired by the industry of the children, whom she taught to spin cotton. At the same time she proved a blessing to the whole village where she lived; for no one could be more industrious, frugal, clever, cheerful, and edifying by her whole walk and conversation; more ready for every good word and work; more mild and affectionate, and more firm and resolute in danger than she was. A fine youth, of generous disposition, made her an offer of marriage, and as she appeared unwilling to accept him, he declared, that if necessary, he would wait ten years to gain her hand. She then acknowledged that the motive for refusing him was the grief it would occasion her to part from her little orphans. "He who takes the mother, takes the children also," replied the young man. On this condition the marriage took place, and all the children were brought up under their mutual care, in the

most excellent manner. They have lately taken in some other orphans, whom they are training up in the fear and love of God. Though these people pass for rather rich, yet their income is so limited, and their benevolence so extensive, that they sometimes hardly know how to furnish themselves with a new suit of clothes. I intend to give *them* a Bible, because their own is often lent out in different Roman Catholic villages.

“The second Bible I intend to give to an excellent woman, named Maria Schepler, who lives at the opposite end of my parish, where the cold is more severe, and the ground unfruitful, so that nearly all the householders are poor people, who must lend their clothes to each other when they intend to go to the Lord’s supper. This poor woman is also a very remarkable character, and I could say much in her praise, were I to enter into particulars. Though distressed and afflicted in her own person and circumstances, yet she is a mother, benefactress, and teacher to the whole village in which she lives, and to some neighbouring districts too. She takes the most lively interest in all that relates to the

Redeemer's kingdom upon earth, and inwardly groans under a sense of the inroads made by the powers of darkness. She, also, has brought up several orphans without receiving the smallest recompence, keeps a free-school for females, and makes it a practice to lend her Bible to such as are deprived of it. I might easily enumerate many more characters of a similar description, whose eyes will overflow with grateful tears, if they are favoured with the present of a Bible."

The manner in which Sophia Bernard came to take the three little children mentioned in the letter, was as follows. Before she married, and when her little family already consisted of seven children, she and her sister Madeleine received a letter from a poor tailor, who lived in a neighbouring Roman Catholic village, entreating them, from what he had heard of their charitable deeds, to take charge of his three little children, all of whom were under four years old, as his wife was sick, and he was utterly unable to provide for them.

Following the benevolent impulse of the moment, or rather the dictates of that bene-

volence by which they were habitually actuated, the two sisters immediately set out, although the evening was already far advanced, and they had dangerous roads to traverse, with their baskets on their backs. At length, regardless of fatigue and exertion, they reached the summit of the mountain upon which the cottage was situated. Softly approaching it, they peeped in at the window, and were confirmed in the truth of the statement they had received, by the evident marks of wretchedness and poverty that the little apartment exhibited. Upon entering it, they found the little creatures in as forlorn a condition as the poor man had described, miserably nursed, and weak and diseased from neglect. They, therefore, without farther deliberation, wrapped them up in flannel, packed them in the baskets at their backs, and took them home. But, as their father's house could not accommodate so large an accession to the family, Sophia hired a servant girl, and an additional room, where she fed, clothed, nourished and educated them, so that they became strong, healthy and industrious. On some of his

neighbours afterwards asking the tailor how he could allow his children to be brought up by Protestants—"Oh," he replied, "if they make such good Protestants of them as they are themselves, I shall thank them for it."

Some time before the establishment of the Paris Bible Society, Oberlin founded an auxiliary to the British and Foreign Bible Society in Waldbach, by devoting a proportion of the offerings of the people to that institution. This was done at stated meetings, held for the purpose of reading the Scriptures, and praying for the success of religious institutions; after which they took up a collection to be distributed by the pastor. He also established Female Bible Associations, by directing the women to lend their Bibles to their neighbours, and read them to those who could not read for themselves.

In his advancing age, Oberlin was assisted by his children in his various labours. Some of them were married, and continued to reside with him. Besides the arts of straw-plaiting, dyeing, &c. which he introduced, he had the people instructed in cotton-spinning by hand, which was very profitable until the

use of machines in the neighbourhood deprived them of this source of income. But this loss was soon supplied by the removal into the Ban of the Messrs. Legrand's manufactory of silk ribbons, which employed several hundred hands—for the population now amounted to three or four thousand. The subjoined letter from one of Oberlin's sons to a friend, gives a more particular account of their situation at this period.

Waldbach, December 11th, 1813.

“Highly honoured Sir, my valued friend, and former teacher.

“My father received your friendly letter on the 10th of April, and he allows me the pleasure of replying to part of it.

“The Steinthal has, during the last few years, witnessed many melancholy, but also many cheering events. Conflagrations, formerly so rare, have destroyed many houses in most of the villages; even the beautiful parsonage of Rothau fell, a few years ago, a prey to the flames. We have also lost, since that period, several of the most worthy inhabitants of our valley, who, both in word and

deed, were bright and shining examples to their contemporaries; such were, for instance, Catherine Gagniere and Catherine Banzet. We must likewise include among our apparent adversities the circumstance of cotton-spinning having been on the decline for several years; and as a similar circumstance occurs with regard to weaving, many families have been thrown into great distress. But God, who has always had an open eye upon the Steinthal, and extended a helping hand towards it, has also manifested himself in the present juncture. Besides the excellent magistrates with whom the whole of my dear father's parish is blessed, God has given us, in the person of the Count Lezay Marnesia, a prefect who entertains an extraordinary affection for the people of the Steinthal. Through his means in particular, and the striking interposition of Providence, the long pending law-suit about the forests, which had been so oppressive to the inhabitants, has been brought to an amicable conclusion this year. It also pleased God to send, a short time since, a gentleman into this country who formerly kept a ribbon

manufactory in Alsace, and who takes a great interest in effectually assisting the inhabitants of the Steinthal. Our good and excellent Louisa Schepler is still alive, and always, in conjunction with my dear father, observing the same fidelity and self-devotion in the performance of her duties. We, his children, have been very much dispersed, but we were much more so a little time ago than we are now. It is, indeed, remarkable how we are concentrated in the Steinthal. My brother Charles has been for some years past clergyman of Rothau.* My sister Frederica, who married the Rev. Mr. Rauscher, now resides at Barr, where Mr. Rauscher keeps a school, and also exercises his ministerial functions. I myself, in fine, come to the Steinthal from Russia, or Livonia, though not by the shortest way. I wrote to you, respected friend, from Riga, under the date of August 2d, 1811. I wrote also, at a later

* Charles Conservé, Oberlin's second son, was born in 1776. In the year 1803, he married Sophia Catharine Franck, of Strasburg, the widow of an officer named Berard. On account of his father's advancing age, he was induced, in 1806, to relieve him of part of his pastoral duties, by accepting the living of Rothau, at which place he still resides.

period, to Dr. Steinkopff, but I never received an answer from your country. I ought to have mentioned above, that the gentleman who is introducing the ribbon manufactory into the Steinthal is a native of Basle; perhaps he is not unknown to you. It is Mr. Legrand, who was formerly a member of the Directory in Switzerland. My dear sister Louisa Charite is married to a good worthy man, the Rev. Peter Witz, of Colmar. Our beloved sister Fidelite has been for several years lost to us in this world, which grieves *me*, in particular, even now.—The good Fidelite—what a faithful sister she was!—as faithful a sister as she was a mother and a wife.*

* Fidelité Caroline Oberlin was married, in 1795, to the Rev. James Wolff, of Mittelberghcim. She died May 9th, 1809, leaving two little girls, who soon followed their mother to the grave. Her death was a great affliction to her near connexions, but especially to Henry, to whom she was remarkably endeared, and to her father. In speaking of this circumstance, Mr. Heisch, the long and intimate friend of the family, says, "I particularly recollect the warm attachment that subsisted between Oberlin's daughter Fidelité, his son Henry, and himself. Oh, he did love his children most tenderly! If I am not mistaken, I saw him weep but once, and that was when he married his daughter Fidelité to Mr. Wolff. Tears of joy in the prospect of her happiness, were then mingled with those tears of grief, which a sepa-

“I shall now conclude, as it is possible that my dear father and Louisa may wish to add a word themselves.

“I remain ever, your grateful old pupil and friend,

“HENRY GOTTFRIED OBERLIN.”

ration from this beloved child could not but occasion. Sometime after he repeatedly visited her at Mittelbergheim, and I had once or twice the pleasure of accompanying him. It is scarcely possible for any one, who was not an eye-witness to this scene, to form an idea of the tender affection that subsisted between father and daughter.”

CHAPTER IX.

ONE of the objects of Oberlin's anxiety was, to put an end to a dispute which had existed for eighty years between the peasantry of the Steinthal, and some proprietors of the territory, concerning the right to the forests which covered the mountains. The law-suit to which it gave rise, was a constant burden to the people, and discouraged their industry. So desirous was the good pastor to have this quarrel terminated, that for many years one of the inscriptions on his doors was :

"O Lord, have mercy on the Steinthal, and put an end to the law-suit."

The excellence of his character had gained him the esteem of the chief officer of the province, who promised to co-operate with him. Oberlin took every opportunity of convincing his people of the great injury the suit was doing them, and that it would be better for them to give up the contest, and live in peace. He succeeded in removing their objections, and after so many years angry contention, the mild pastor saw the difficulty removed on

terms advantageous to both parties. The officer was so much struck with this example of his influence, that he requested Oberlin to hang up in his study the pen that had signed the amicable agreement, as a monument of the victory of the Christian graces over long hatred and bad feeling. He complied with the request, and used to say that the day on which that pen was used, (which was June 6, 1813,) was one of the happiest of his life.

In 1817, another beloved son, a minister of the Gospel, fell ill in France, whilst travelling in the service of the Bible Society. He returned to the district, to a village nine miles from his father's residence. No sooner did the people of Waldbach hear of his desire to die at his native place, than twelve peasants immediately set out, and offered to carry him home on a litter. But as he could not bear exposure to the open air, he was placed in a covered cart, and as it proceeded slowly through the valley, the peasants walked before it, removing every stone out of the way of the wheels. A few weeks after his arrival, his sufferings were terminated by a triumphant death.

A report was made to the Agricultural Society of Paris, in 1818, of the improvements Oberlin had effected in the cultivation of the soil. The Count of Neufchateau said to the Society: "If you would behold an instance of what may be effected in any country for the advancement of agriculture and the interests of humanity, quit for a moment the banks of the Seine, and ascend one of the steepest summits of the Vosges mountains. Friends of the plough, and of human happiness, come and behold the Ban de la Roche! Climb with me the rocks so sublimely piled upon each other, which separate this canton from the rest of the world, and though the country and the climate may at first sight appear forbidding, I will venture to promise you an ample recompense for the fatigue of your excursion.

"As for myself, after having formed the administration of the department of the Vosges in 1790, and presided over it in 1791, I had, in 1793, to travel over those mountains, as a commissioner of the government, at the very period when the parishes of Rothau and Waldbach, before that time dependent on the

principality of Salm were united to the department. I have, therefore, been long acquainted with the valuable services rendered, for more than fifty years, to the Ban de la Roche, by John Frederic Oberlin. Ever since that time, and to the advanced age of seventy-eight, he has persevered in carrying forward the interesting reformation first suggested and commenced by his virtue, piety and zeal. He has refused invitations to more important and more lucrative situations, lest the Ban de la Roche should relapse into its former desolate state; and by his extraordinary efforts and unabated exertions, he averted from his parishioners, in the years 1812, 1816, and 1817, the horrors of approaching famine.*

“Such a benefactor of mankind deserves

* The new crop of potatoes that Oberlin had introduced, formed the principal subsistence of the people during those disastrous years, when the season was so cold and rainy that they could not get in two-thirds of the corn at all; and the scarcity so great, that poor little children, exhausted with hunger, were seen to drop down in the streets. A sack of wheat during that time of distress rose to nearly thirty dollars in price, and the potatoes to about one cent apiece.

The precise acquaintance which the inhabitants of the Ban de la Roche had acquired, through Oberlin's assistance, with the vegetable productions of their canton, was believed to be the means of preventing the most distressing diseases.

the veneration and the gratitude of all good men ; and it gives me peculiar pleasure to present you with the opportunity of acknowledging, in the person of M. Oberlin, not a single act, but a whole life, devoted to agricultural improvements, and to the diffusion of useful knowledge among the inhabitants of a wild and uncultivated district.

“ We have already ascertained that there is in France uncultivated land sufficient for the formation of five thousand villages. When we wish to organize these colonies, Waldbach will present a perfect model ; and, in the thirty or forty rural hamlets which already exist, there is not one, even amongst the most flourishing, in which social economy is carried to a higher degree of perfection, or in which the annals of the Ban de la Roche may not be studied with advantage.”—A gold medal was presented to him by the society, as a testimony of their gratification. He was also honoured with a badge of distinction by the king, Louis XVIII.

At one time, Oberlin was not only minister, schoolmaster, farmer, and mechanic, but also physician to his parish, having learned some-

thing of the art whilst tutor to the doctor's family, as before mentioned. He used to climb the steepest mountains, at all seasons and hours, to visit the sick, and would travel in the night to Strasburg to purchase physic for them. These attentions endeared him still more to his parishioners, who looked up to him with the greatest love and veneration, notwithstanding the familiar affection with which he treated them. He did not pass those amongst them who were grown up, without pulling off his hat and speaking a few words of kindness, nor any of the children without shaking them by the hand, or showing them some little act of attention. "Jesus," he often said, "loved children. It is to such as resemble them that he promises the kingdom of heaven." He was extremely anxious, in every part of his conduct, to prevent the possibility of misconception on the part of those over whom he watched. "On one occasion," says a person who visited the Ban de la Roche a few years ago, "as we were walking up a hill, he had the arm of his son-in-law, whilst my wife was walking alone. Fearing this might be considered self-indulgent or disre-

spectful by some of his younger parishioners, whom we happened to pass, he stopped to make an apology to them for this apparent disregard of the law of civility and kindness.*

“When our postilion, who appeared to have some previous acquaintance with the Ban de la Roche, met him,” continues the same friend, “he and the old man were instantly with their hats lowered to the ground, whilst Oberlin stepped forward to shake him by the hand, and to make some inquiry about his friends at Strasburg. This was done with all the sweetness of Christian feeling, whilst there was no departure from the dignity with which his situation and circumstances naturally invested him. Good manners prevailed in these valleys to an extent that is rarely witnessed. The practice of the pastor produced the happiest effects upon the mass of the population. The habitual politeness of the French character might have assisted in this work, but I have never witnessed in any other poor people such re-

* It should be remembered that Oberlin was then in his eighth year.

markable and universal suavity:—such complete refinement as in these hardy mountaineers.

“As the Dear Papa had the highest regard for his people, so he had the best opinion of their skill, and wondered that any should doubt about it. I happened one day, when we were driven by a man who seemed to go on in a hazardous manner, to say “Take care.” The old man appeared hurt at this admonition, both on my account and on that of the driver. He assured me that all was safe, and at the end of our drive, took the greatest pains to prevent any feeling of vexation which might arise in the mind of his parishioner.”

Oberlin's habits were very orderly. Every thing seemed to have its place in his house. There was a box to deposit every morsel of litter, which could only be of service in the stove. His books, a great number of which were in manuscript, were perfectly arranged, and written in a beautiful hand, for it was a point of duty with him, to give every letter its perfect formation. His Bible was marked throughout with different coloured ink, according to the application which he, in the

course of his reading, had made of different passages.

In conversation he was fluent and very unreserved; willing to communicate all he knew; and, on the other hand, inquisitive as to every thing which he saw, and from which it appeared likely he could derive information. He once wrote under his profile the following character of himself: "A strange compound of contradictory qualities. I do not yet exactly know what I am to make of myself. I am intelligent, and yet possessed of very limited powers:—prudent, and more politic than my fellow-clergymen; but also very apt to blunder, especially when in the least excited. I am firm, yet of a yielding disposition; and both of these, in certain cases, to a great degree. I am not only daring, but actually courageous; whilst, at the same time, I am often in secret very cowardly. I am very upright and sincere, yet also very complaisant to men, and in a degree, therefore, insincere. I am a German and a Frenchman; noble, generous, ready to render service, faithful, very grateful,—deeply affected by the least benefit or kindness, which is ever after en-

graven on my heart; and yet, again, flighty and indifferent. I am irritable to a formidable degree. He who treats me generously soon gains the ascendancy over me; but opposition creates in me an astonishing degree of firmness, especially in matters of conscience. I have a lively imagination, but no memory, properly speaking. The histories which I have taken pains to impress on my mind remain with me, but dates and the names of persons I often forget the next day, notwithstanding all the pains I have taken to remember them. I used to speak Latin fluently and even elegantly, but now I cannot utter three or four words together. I make selections from books, and instruct others in some branch of science for a long time; but a few years after, my scholars, even if they know nothing more than what I taught them, may in their turn become my teachers, and the books from which I made extracts (with the exception of those of a certain description) appear wholly new to me.

“I habitually work my way through my studies till I obtain clear ideas; but if I wish to penetrate deeper, every thing vanishes be-

fore me. I have a great talent for removing difficulties in order to render every thing easy and smooth to myself, and to every body else. I am so extremely sensitive, tender, and compassionate, that I can find neither words nor expressions corresponding to my feelings, so that the latter almost overpower me, and occasion me acute pain. I am always busy and industrious, but also fond of ease and indolence. I am generally quick in resolving, and equally so in executing. I have a peculiar esteem for the female sex. I am a very great admirer of painting, music and poetry, and yet I have no skill in any of them. Mechanics, natural history, and so forth, constitute my favourite studies. I am very fond of regularity, and of arranging and classifying, but my weak memory, added to constant employment, renders it difficult to me. I am given to planning and scheming, and yet endeavour, in my peculiar way, to do things in the best manner.

“I am a genuine soldier, but I was more so before my bodily powers were so much weakened; I was formerly anxious to be the foremost in danger, and the firmest in pain,

but have now lost that desire. From my childhood I have felt a longing and preponderating desire for a higher state of existence, and therefore a wish for death. I am the greatest admirer of military order and subordination, not, however, in a spirit of slavery, but of that noble affectionate attachment which compels the coward to show courage, and the disorderly to be punctual. I feel no obstinacy or disinclination to yield to strong internal conviction, but on the other hand a fervent heart-felt joy in yielding to both great and small, high and low, gentlemen and peasants, children and servants, and thence a willingness to listen, and an inclination to suffer myself, if possible, to be convinced. But when I feel no conviction, I can never think of yielding. I am humourous and a little witty or satirical, but without intentional malice."

As the villages of his little district were too far apart to allow of his preaching every week in all of them, he took each of the three in rotation, and the peasants brought a horse for him every Sunday morning to take him to the church, and afterwards to dine with some one of them. He took this occasion to in-

quire into their temporal and spiritual wants, and always saw each of the children of the house separately, to talk with them according to their respective ages and dispositions.

CHAPTER X.

THE following letter was written by an English clergyman, Mr. Owen, the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, after a visit to Waldbach, describing a Sunday spent there.

“The place from which my last was dated, Waldbach, has completely filled my mind, and laid such hold on my warmest affections, that I can scarcely bring myself to think, or speak, or write, on any thing but pastor Oberlin, and his Ban de la Roche. You will remember that the first foreign letter which awakened an interest in our minds—the letter which made its way most directly to our hearts, and which, at the celebration of our first anniversary, produced the strongest, and if I may judge of others by myself, the most lasting impression upon us all, was that wherein this venerable pastor reported the distribution he proposed to make of the Bibles assigned to him, and drew, with the hand of a master, the characters of those women who laboured with him in the gospel,

and to whom, as the highest remuneration he could bestow, and their ambition coveted, a Bible was to be presented.*

“I cannot describe the sensations with which I entered the mountainous parish, containing five villages and three churches, in which this primitive evangelist, who for more than half a century has occupied this station, exercises his functions; and still less those with which I entered his residence, and approached his venerable person. The reception he gave me was such, as from the profound humility of his character might have been anticipated. My visit to him and his flock was wholly unexpected: and when I announced to him, in my introduction, that I appeared before him as the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to testify, on their part, the respect and affection with which they regarded him, as one of the earliest and most interesting of their foreign correspondents, the good man took me by the hand, and drew me gently toward the seat which he usually occupies, exclaiming, ‘Sir, this is too great an honour! how shall I

* This is the letter, part of which is printed on pages 70—73.

answer words like these ?” After the first emotions had subsided, our conversation became familiar ; and as it never ceased, from that time to the moment of our separation, to turn more or less upon the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, as they appeared in the small scale of his own, or the great scale of the Society’s labours, it never ceased to be deeply interesting, and full of edification.

“The Sunday exhibited this venerable man in the pastoral character, under which it had been so much my desire to see him. As he makes the circuit of his churches, the turn on this Sunday belonged to Belmont, distant about half a league from the parsonage of Waldbach. At ten o’clock we began to move, Mr. Oberlin took the lead in his ministerial attire, mounted on a horse brought for that purpose, according to custom, by one of the peasants, whose turn it was to have the honour of bringing his pastor, and receiving him to dinner at his table. I rode as nearly beside him as the narrow track could allow. Mr. Ronneburg, accompanied by Mr. Legrand, followed. The rear was brought up by the peasant before mentioned, carrying a

leathern bag slung across his shoulders, which contained the other part of the minister's dress, his books, &c. and another peasant as an attendant on the general cavalcade. I will not detain you by particulars, which, however interesting, would draw me too far from the main object of my attention. I will only say, that the appearance of the congregation, their neat and becoming costume, their order and seriousness, together with the fervour, tenderness and simplicity with which the good minister addressed them, both in his sermon and his catechetical lecture in the afternoon, conveyed to my mind the most delightful impression—that of a sincere and elevated devotion. The interval between the services was passed partly in dining at the house of the happy peasant, and partly in visiting some of the excellent individuals, both men and women, with whom this part of the parish abounds. The affability and graceful condescension with which the pastor saluted every member of his flock, wherever he met them, and the affectionate reverence with which young and old returned the salutation, were peculiarly pleasing: it was,

on both sides, if a ceremony at all, the ceremony of the heart. On our return to the parsonage, the evening was passed in edifying conversation, and concluded by a French hymn, in which all the household united. On the next morning, I had the honour of conveying my venerable host, amidst the bowings of his parishioners, who gazed with wonder at the unusual sight of their pastor in a travelling carriage, to the house of Mr. Legrand at Foudai, another of the villages in the parish. Here we breakfasted; and after much pleasing conversation, I had the honour of being introduced to Sophia Bernard and Catherine Scheidecker. Never shall I forget the manner in which these interesting peasants received me, when, addressing them by name, I told them that I had known them nearly fourteen years, and that the account of their services, communicated to us by the pastor whom they so greatly assisted, had been instrumental in stirring up the zeal of many to labour after their example. 'Oh Sir,' said Sophia, the tears filling her eyes at the time, 'this does indeed humble us;' adding many pious remarks in



Wachman's View of the Valley of the Rhine, 1840.

Wachman's View.

FOUDAI CHURCH, FROM THE BASLE ROAD.

relation to their obscurity, the imperfection of their works, and the honour they considered it to labour for Him who had done so much, yea, every thing, for them. The scene was truly affecting. It was not without many an effort that I tore myself from it, and hurried from the Ban de la Roche, that seat of simplicity, piety, and true christian refinement, to resume my journey along the beaten road, and to pursue my object among scenes, which, whatever pleasure I had to expect, would suffer in the comparison with those which I had left behind me." ³₁₆

Our readers will not be unwilling to hear as much as possible of this delightful place, and we therefore add to the above, the account given by a French gentleman who visited Waldbach in 1793.

"During the space of nearly thirty years, in which Mr. Oberlin has been pastor of this district, he has completely changed it. The language is, from an unintelligible jargon, altered into pure French; the manners of the people are civilized, and ignorance is banished, without injuring the simplicity of their character. Many of the women belong-

ing to his parishes, trained for the purpose under his fatherly care, (and called *conductresses*,) assist him in his occupations. They teach reading, writing, and the elements of geography, in the different villages where they live; and by them the children are taught many necessary things, but, above all, have the seeds of religion and morality sown in their hearts. The excellence of these schools is so well established, that girls are sent to them from distant parts, and the title of "a scholar of pastor Oberlin," is a testimonial of excellence. His countenance is affectionate, friendly, and benevolent. His conversation is easy and flowing, and always adapted to the capacity of those to whom he is speaking. We accompanied him on his way to Waldbach. We had a wooded hill to ascend; the sun was just setting, and it was a beautiful evening. He related to us the circumstances of his past life, and spoke of his views and ideas, and the fear and love of God, in a most touching manner. One moment was particularly affecting, when, stopping about half way up the hill, he answered in the softest tone to our question

cipally intended for the young, at which time he always catechized them. The following is a translation of one of the hymns that were sung in his church.

O Lord, thy heavenly grace impart,
And fix my frail inconstant heart;
Henceforth my chief desire shall be,
To dedicate myself to Thee!

To Thee, my God, to Thee!

Whate'er pursuits my time employ,
One thought shall fill my soul with joy;
That silent, secret thought shall be,
That all my hopes are fixed on Thee!

On Thee, my God, on Thee!

Thy glorious eye pervadeth space,
Thou'rt present, Lord, in every place;
And wheresoe'er my lot may be,
Still shall my spirit cleave to Thee!

To Thee, my God, to Thee!

Renouncing every worldly thing,
Safe, 'neath the shelter of Thy wing,
My sweetest thought henceforth shall be,
That all I want I find in Thee!

In Thee, my God, in Thee!

Besides the services on Sunday, Oberlin preached every Friday evening in German, for the benefit of those who understood that language better than French. At these meetings he would use the plainest and most

familiar manner in his instructions. When he had read a portion of Scripture and explained it for about half an hour, he would say to them—"well, my children, are you not tired? have you not had enough? tell me my friends." To which they would generally reply, "no, papa, go on—we should like to hear a little more;" according to which answers he would either stop at once, or go on until they would agree that he should conclude. At these meetings the women brought their knitting, an employment which did not prevent their attention to the exhortations and reading.

Oberlin was in the habit of reminding his people of particular duties by writing them letters on the subject. The following may serve as specimens.

"Dear Friends, Fathers, and Mothers!

"I have a request to make to you. You give shepherds to your sheep, to lead them into green pastures, to feed, tend and preserve them from danger, and you do well.

"But have you no fears for your children? Does not Satan go about to tempt them to do

wrong? Then give them shepherds likewise, and never allow them to be left to their own devices. Let them work and amuse themselves under proper inspection and superintendence, but let this superintendence be wise, prudent, gentle, kind, and engaging; and whilst it leads you to take part in their amusements, and to direct, animate, and enliven them, let it also restrain them within due bounds. Whatever it costs you, God will restore it a thousand fold."

"And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not; am I my brother's keeper? (Gen. iv. 9.) The Lord said to Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? O, may these words resound continually in the ears of every parent! "Father, where is thy son?" Fathers of Belmont! Fathers of Bellefosse; of Waldbach; of Foudai, and Zolbach! Father, where is thy son? In what village? in what house? in what company? How is he employed? It behoves you to be able to answer these inquiries by night and by day; on Sundays and on working-days; wherever you are, and whatever

you are doing. You are the guardians of your children; and whether they are employed in work, or relaxation and amusement, it is your duty to superintend and direct their amusements and pursuits.

“Do it; do it, henceforth, with faithfulness, vigilance, and zeal; with earnest and secret prayer, that God may pardon you for past unfaithfulness, and deliver your sons from the sin and danger into which your carelessness, and want of parental watchfulness, may have driven them. This is the desire of

“Your Papa and Minister,

“J. F. OBERLIN.”

“Waldbach, March 13, 1803.

“Dear Friends,

“Is not this one of the two principal commandments—‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?’ Matt. xxii. 39. Is it not as much as to say, when thy cattle can spare a little of thy hay, supply those who stand in need? But as thou canst not give to all who want, choose those who are in the greatest necessity and poverty, and, from among them select such individuals as are most earnest in

obeying the commandments of Jesus Christ, and in endeavouring to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Say to thyself, 'to such will I sell my hay,' and then let them have it at so low a price, that they may rejoice and bless God.

"And afterwards be careful to furnish them with the means of liberating themselves from the debt which they have incurred, as far as thou art able to do so.

"Be the father of the poor, and God will be thy father. Remember that it is impossible to love God with thy whole heart, without loving thy neighbour also.

"Tread not in the steps of others, but be thou a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Be the father of the poor. Choose those who fear God most. Make good speed about it, for perhaps thou wilt not be much longer in possession of terrestrial riches."

He endeavoured by these means to keep their attention constantly awake to their duties. He also addressed written questions to them, which they were expected to answer fully. The following are some of them.

“Do you and your family regularly attend places of religious instruction ?

“Do you never pass a Sunday without employing yourself in some charitable work ?

“Do neither you, nor your wife or children ever wander in the woods on a Sunday, in search of wild raspberries, strawberries, whortle-berries, mulberries, or hazel-nuts, instead of going to church ? and if you have erred in this manner, will you solemnly promise to do so no more ?

“Are you careful to provide yourself with clean suitable clothes for going to church in ?

“Do those who are provided with clothes, employ a regular part of their income to procure them for their destitute neighbours, or to relieve their other necessities ?

“Do you so love and reverence our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, as to feel united in the bonds of Christian fellowship with that flock of which he is the pastor ?

“Do you give your creditors reason to be satisfied with your honesty and punctuality ? or can they say of you that you are more desirous of purchasing superfluous clothes than of paying your debts ?

“Do you send your children regularly to school?”

“Do you watch over them as God requires you should do? And is your conduct towards them, such as will insure their affection, respect and obedience?”

“Are you, as well as your sons, acquainted with some little handicraft work to employ your spare moments, instead of letting them pass away in idleness?”

On the first day of the year 1779 he circulated the following address among them.

“And he that sat upon the throne said, behold I make all things new.”—Rev. xxi. 5.

“Through the grace of God, we have entered upon a new year. Oh, that it may be new with respect to our sins, our sufferings, and the temptations with which we may have to combat.

“As to sins, may their number diminish day by day, and may we be more constantly animated, and governed by the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. As to sufferings and tribulations, may they produce the effect that God designs in sending them, namely, that of

detaching our affections from this transitory world, and of rendering us attentive to his will and word. May they quicken us to prayer ; and induce us to strive more earnestly to enter in at the strait gate, and to ‘press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling.’ And as to the temptations which may be placed in our way, may we live entirely to Jesus Christ, and maintain constant communion with him, in order that we may receive, from time to time, fresh supplies of grace and strength to resist them, and be enabled to bring forth fruits of righteousness, to the glory of God, and to the honour of his holy gospel. O Lord, be thou pleased, with the renewal of the year, to renew our strength. O Lord Jesus Christ, thou hast said, ‘I make all things new,’ O make our faith new also !

“May this year be marked by a more lively, more deep, and more serious repentance ; by greater fervour in supplicating the influences of God’s Holy Spirit ; by renewed earnestness in devoting ourselves to Him, and to his service. May we look to Him, and employ all our mental and bodily powers, our

time, and our property, to his glory, and to the purpose for which Jesus quitted his throne, namely, the conversion and happiness of mankind. O may we, this year, apply ourselves, with renewed faithfulness, to obey all his commandments, and all his precepts.

“May this year be distinguished by an increase of the number of the children of God, and of the followers of Jesus Christ; by the weakening of the kingdom of Satan within us, and by the coming of the kingdom of God

“May we, not only during the present, but also, during each succeeding year which God shall grant us in this world, become more and more prepared for a blessed eternity—abound more in prayers of intercession and supplication—shed more tears of penitence, contrition, love and pity; and perform more good works, in order that we may reap an abundant harvest on that day, when God, through Jesus Christ, shall ‘make all things new.’ ”

He kept a private book, in which he recorded his observations on the spiritual con-

dition of his people individually. This guided him in his conversation and preaching, and enabled him to adapt his instructions to their wants. He thought there were many particulars in which their situation resembled that of the children of Israel under Moses, and he adopted many of the laws prescribed for them.

The affectionate manner in which he entered into familiar conversation with them upon such subjects as the diffusion of religious knowledge, the conversion of the heathen, and the exertions of God's devoted servants in bearing to others the "unsearchable riches of Christ," seldom failed to gain their attention, and to awaken in their hearts the warmest interest, whilst it had, at the same time, a most happy effect upon their manners; inducing, in some of the poor women particularly, a refinement and softness not often met with in persons of the same class, entirely free from pride, awkwardness, or forwardness. The following anecdote is a pleasing illustration of these remarks.

During Dr. and Mrs. Steinkopff's visit to the Ban de la Roche, in 1820, they one day

took a walk up the side of the mountain with Mr. Graff. The little path they were following, led to Bellefosse, whither they were going, to pay a visit to Madeleine Kruger, one of the exemplary poor women of that village. In the middle of a wood, through which the road led, they met a peasant, simply attired, with a pleasing open countenance, and a basket at her back.

“Good morning! I am rejoiced to have met you, my dear Priscilla,” said Mr. Graff, “I have the pleasure of introducing you to this lady and gentleman, from England. You are well acquainted with the name of the gentleman. He is Dr. Steinkopff, one of the Secretaries of the Bible Society which has supplied us with so many Bibles.”—“Oh! God be praised for it, my dear Sir!” replied the peasant. “Yes, I am well acquainted with your name! I have read the reports which make mention of you. Is it possible,” and she joined her hands together, “that I have the honour of seeing you here on earth! Often, yes, often, I think of the people of whom I read, and who have been brought to our dear Saviour, through the means, through

the generosity, of that noble Society. Ah, what reason have *we* to rejoice, who live in the abundance of spiritual blessings; and how much should we wish to procure the same advantages for those who are destitute of them! Yes; we are very rich here, in this Ban de la Roche. Oh that we may never be unfaithful to that light which God has been pleased to grant us! I am truly delighted with all that I hear, and especially that I have the pleasure of seeing you. I recollect what our good pastor one day said at a funeral, when he saw a poor child weeping bitterly over its grandmother, whom they were going to bury, ‘My dear child, instead of weeping for your grand-mamma, who is now no more, endeavour to live in a manner conformable to the will of God; believe, dear, in your Saviour, and then, in his good time, you will meet her again in heaven, never more to be separated.’ I also pray, Sir, that it may please God to grant me grace to live the life of a Christian, that when I die, my spirit may join those pure and happy spirits who have done so much good upon earth.”

“The manners and expression of this inter-

esting young woman," says Mrs. Steinkopff, "were very superior; for with all the animation and sprightliness of the French, much zeal and humility were conspicuous."

"On reaching Bellefosse," continues the letter, "we visited the white-washed cottage of Madeleine Kruger; its neat painted casements and clean steps announced the comfort to be found within. We entered through a kitchen, with a well furnished dresser and good oven. 'Happily come,' said she; 'you do me too much honour. I am this moment returned, and I should be sorry not to have been here on your arrival; my door is not yet unlocked;' and as she spoke she reached the key and opened it into a very good room, at one end of which stood her bed with pretty blue cotton curtains, and on one side a long table with benches around it, all as white as wood could be made; on the table lay a Moravian text-book open, in which she had been reading. Whilst we were there, a tall agreeable looking man, with a slouched hat and blue trowsers and jacket, came in; he was mayor and schoolmaster at the same time."

They afterwards proceeded to the neat,

clean, and comfortable cottage of Sophia Bernard, at Foudai, with whom they were to take tea; she met them at the door and showed them into a good-sized room, where on a long deal table, almost as white as snow, were placed some beautiful flowers, and cups and saucers, cream and cakes, supplied by Mrs. Legrand, who, with her husband, sons and daughters, drank tea with them. The cups and saucers were very handsome, being of white and yellow china, and had different German sentences upon them. Upon Mrs. Steinkopff's cup this motto was inscribed, "Pray for me, and I will pray for thee." Two benches were placed along the table, and Sophia stood behind, to wait. She was, like many of the female peasants of the Steinthal, delicate in her appearance, with a mild and gentle countenance, and peculiar humility of deportment. She looked upon her guests with the greatest pleasure and satisfaction, listening to all that was said, and lifting up her hands in gratitude to God, for what she heard concerning the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth by the success of Missionary and Bible Societies. On the

parture of her visitors she knelt down, and prayed very fervently for their protection."

There is a journal by another lady who visited the Steinthal in 1820, and notwithstanding the various accounts we have already given, we are persuaded it will be interesting; and it is the last we have. On their way to Oberlin's house they met him. "He received us cordially, and we soon felt quite at ease with him. We all proceeded together towards his house, which stands on the top of a hill surrounded by trees and cottages: if we live to return you shall see my sketch of it. I could see nothing like a mistress in the house: but an old woman, called Louisa, dressed in a long woollen jacket and black cotton cap, came to welcome us, and we afterwards found that she is an important person at the Ban de la Roche. Besides Louisa, the son-in-law and daughter, and their six children live here, two young girls, and two more maids out of the parish. We were ushered into the dining-room, where stood the table spread for supper: a great bowl of pottage—a pewter plate and spoon for every body:—the luxury of a common

English cottage is not known here. But we see the fruits and feel the blessed effects of religion in its simplest form; it is a great privilege to be here, and I trust will be truly useful to us.

“Tuesday.—We are become more acquainted with this extraordinary people. They are as interesting as they are uncommon. I much regret that I cannot talk more fluently with them; yet I get on as well as I can, and have a good deal of pleasing communication with them. I never knew so well what the *grace* of courtesy was till I saw Oberlin. He treats the poorest people, and even the children, with an affectionate respect. For instance, his courtesy, kindness, and hospitality to our postilion were quite amusing. He pulled his hat off when we met him, took him by the hand, and treated him with really tender consideration. He is, I think, more than eighty—one of the handsomest old men I remember ever to have seen—still vigorous in mind and spirit—delighting in his parish—full of fervent charity. We all sit down to the same table, maids and all, one great dish of pottage or boiled spi-

nach, and a quantity of salad and potatoes, upon which they chiefly live, being placed in the middle. He shakes hands with all the little children as he passes them in the street, speaking particularly to them individually: it is quite wonderful to see the effect and polish which this sort of treatment and manner has had upon these people, uncultivated and uncivilized as they were before, from all accounts. I never met with any thing like such cultivation of mind amongst *poor* people. They have been taught a variety of things which have enlarged and polished their minds besides religion; music, geography, drawing, botany, &c. If you go into a cottage they expect you will eat and drink with them; a clean cloth is laid upon the table, washed almost as white as milk, and the new milk and the wine, and the great loaf of bread are brought out; yet they are in reality exceedingly poor. Their beds also look so clean and good that they would astonish our poor people. In some respects I think they are decidedly cleaner than our poor. Their dress is simple to the greatest degree. The women and girls all dress alike, even down

to the very little children. They wear caps of dark cotton, with black ribbon, and the hair bound closely under. Every body—maids, children, poor and rich, call Mr. Oberlin their “Dear Papa,” and never was there a more complete father of a large family. We breakfast at seven; the family upon potatoes boiled with milk and water—a little coffee is provided for us. We dine at twelve, and sup at half-past seven. Every thing is in the most primitive style. I never saw such people for not taking money. It is almost impossible to pay any body for any service they do for you. In our visits to the poor we have been afraid of offering them money; but we feel anxious to throw in some assistance towards the many important objects which Mr. Oberlin is carrying on amongst his people. It is almost past belief what he has done, and with *very limited* means. Three poor dear women are noted for their benevolence; one especially, who is a widow herself with several children, has taken to support and bring up three orphan children; and she has lately taken another from no other principle than abounding christian

charity. One seldom meets with such shining characters. Mr. O. told Mr. Cunningham the other day, he did not know how to pay Louisa, for nothing hurt her so much as offering her money. No one can be more devoted to his service, and in the most disinterested manner. Her character has impressed me very much. We had a delightful walk to a church about two miles distant, on Sunday morning; the numbers of poor, flocking from the distant villages, dressed in their simple and neat costume, formed a striking object in the scene. It happened to be the Sunday Mr. O. goes to the next parish, where his son has him to assist in giving prizes to the school children.

“Wednesday evening.—The poor charm me. I never met with any like them; so much spirituality, humility and cultivation of mind, with manners that would do honour to a court; yet the homely dress and the simplicity of the peasant are not lost. The state of the schools, the children, and the poor in general, is quite extraordinary, and as much exceeds our parish as ours does the most neglected.

“ We have spent our time in the following manner:—Since Sunday the mornings have been very wet; we have therefore been chiefly shut up in our own room, reading, writing, and drawing; the eldest of the Graffs, (Marie) a sweet girl, is a good deal with me, to read and to talk to me. The children and young people in the house are becoming fond of me; our being here is quite a gaiety and amusement to them. Our room joins Oberlin’s library, and all the family are free to enter whenever they like. The whole system is most amusing, interesting and useful. It is a capital example, and instructive for the minister of a parish. I have felt it very enlarging and good for us to be here. There is a spirit of good fellowship and kindness amongst all the people that is quite delightful. The longer we have been here, the more we have been struck with the uncommon degree of virtue which exists amongst them. On Monday evening, we were taken to the cottage of Sophia Bernard, where we found the table spread in the most complete manner for our tea, a luxury we had not enjoyed since we left England. Here we passed some time,

eating, talking, and reading the Bible; and it ended with prayer, by Sophia Bernard, in a sweet and feeling manner. We then had a charming walk through the valley home.

“Tuesday.—In the afternoon we ascended towards the very top of the mountains, to another of his villages, where we again found some excellent women, and a capital school. This afternoon we have been drinking tea with the Legrands; so comfortable and complete a house and family are rarely to be met with in any country. The three pairs have each the most complete little dwelling, but in the same house. Our intercourse with them has been truly pleasant; they have treated us with real Christian kindness.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE infirmities of old age compelled the pastor to give up the performance of his most active duties to his son-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Graff. He at last could do little more than pray for his beloved people; and that none might be omitted, he used in the morning to take the register of the children in his hand, and to pray, at intervals during the day, for each one separately, as well as for the community at large. At all times he had a deep feeling of the value of intercessory prayer, and he was so fearful of forgetting any whose cases required particular remembrance, that he used to write their names with chalk on the door of his chamber. The last account we have of the parish, until his death, is in a letter from one of his married daughters, dated March 14, 1826.

“Our parish has now possessed the Holy Scriptures for more than a century, and they form the basis of daily instruction in the schools. In addition to this, the young people have long been in the habit of receiving

religious instruction from their pastor, so that a gradual and imperceptible improvement, resembling the growth of plants in a well cultivated garden, has taken place. You may form some estimate of their moral progress, by the spirit of charity which manifests itself, on occasion of the death of a poor father or mother leaving a numerous family; and by the eagerness with which the relations, friends, or neighbours of the deceased, take charge of the children, not to treat them as strangers and dependents, but as members of their own household. These noble actions do not arise from any fixed methodical rules, nor are they confined to any particular epoch; but are owing to the instructions of the good pastor, and to the excellent regulations which he has led his parishioners to adopt.

“This delightful spirit of benevolence particularly manifests itself, also, in the eager alacrity with which the young people assist the old and feeble in their rural labours. No sooner are their own tasks completed in the evening, than the signal is given, and they set off to execute in concert some labour, which, by its charitable object, becomes a recreation.

Is a new cottage to be built—the young people take upon themselves the task of collecting the materials together, and of assisting in its erection. Does it happen that a poor man loses his cow—his only support—the whole parish subscribe and raise a sum sufficient to replace it. Is a poor man visited with a misfortune of any kind—he is not the only sufferer—for all his neighbours participate in his affliction, as the Apostle says, ‘If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.’ 1 Cor. xii. 26.

“These admirable works are doubtless effected by the influence of the Holy Spirit from on high, and by that spirit of Christian benevolence which the attentive and constant perusal of the Holy Scriptures cannot fail to inculcate.

“I will just mention as a single instance, among others, of the transforming power of religion, that one young woman refused to marry, that she might devote her time, her talents and her strength, to works of benevolence; and, allowing herself only the bare necessities of life, she presented the fruits of her assiduous and unremitting industry to the

excellent and pious institutions of the present day: she also sold all that she thought she could do without, and gave the produce to such objects as she believed calculated to advance the kingdom of our adorable Lord and Saviour.

“The excellent Sophia Bernard, after whom you inquire, left her dwelling here below to inhabit a brighter mansion, about four years since, to the great regret of the whole parish, and of the inhabitants of the adjacent villages, who, though of a different religious denomination, considered that they had lost in her a mother, consoler, and comforter.

“Catherine Scheidecker and Maria Miller still live, though the former is very infirm. They both continue to walk in the path of Gospel truth; endeavouring to follow the steps of their Divine Master, and praying to him continually for the salvation of their families, and that of all the inhabitants of their parish, as well as for every individual living. Both are poor in the wealth of this world, but rich in faith; and they take every opportunity of evincing their gratitude to God, whose love is shed abroad in their hearts.

“My venerable father sends you the salutation of a friend and brother in Christ Jesus our Lord, and implores the blessing of Almighty God upon you, and the labourers of your society. He longs for the joyful period, when, released from his narrow prison-house of clay, he may enter upon that happiness which is to be acquired only through the merits of the Son of God, whose name is the ‘Wonderful, Counsellor, the Prince of Peace.’ ”

He employed part of his time in writing useful essays on various subjects, but was suddenly attacked by his last illness, on Sunday, the 28th of May 1826. The whole of the two next days were passed in alternate consciousness and insensibility, but he often exclaimed, “Lord Jesus, take me speedily ! nevertheless, thy will be done !” On Wednesday, he was exceedingly weakened by convulsions, but still intimated by signs, the affection he felt for his children, his friends, his faithful house-keeper, and all the members of his flock. On Thursday he recovered strength enough to take off his cap, join his hands and raise his eyes for the last time to heaven ; his counte-

nance beaming with faith, joy, and love. In a few hours he breathed his last, being nearly eighty-six years of age, and in the sixtieth year of his residence in Waldbach.

The grief of the peasants cannot be described; they came from all parts of the district through heavy rains, to see the remains of their dear pastor. His funeral took place on the fifth of June. Upon leaving the house, his Bible, and the gown he preached in were placed upon his coffin; ten or twelve females sang a hymn as the procession moved on. In front of the body walked the oldest inhabitant of the Ban, carrying a cross, which Louisa, Oberlin's housekeeper, had given him to plant on the grave, and on which were inscribed the words, "Papa Oberlin." The number of persons attending the funeral was so great, that the foremost had reached the church of Foudai, where the burial was to take place, before the last had left the house, a distance of two miles. Among them were the children of the schools, who chaunted hymns as they went along. When they arrived at the church, as many entered it as it could hold, whilst the rest remained in the

yard, keeping the most perfect order. A minister read from the pulpit a paper written by Oberlin many years before, in contemplation of his death. After giving some account of his coming among them, the paper concluded thus: "And thou, O my dear parish! neither will God forget nor forsake thee. He has towards thee, as I have often said, thoughts of peace and mercy. All things will go well with thee. Only cleave thou to Him, and leave Him to act. O! mayest thou forget my name, and retain only that of Jesus Christ, whom I have proclaimed to thee. He is thy pastor; I am but his servant. He is that good master, who, after having trained and prepared thee from my youth, sent me to thee, that I might be useful. He alone is wise, good, almighty, and merciful; and as for me, I am but a poor, feeble, wretched man.

"O, my friends, pray, in order that you may all become the beloved sheep of his pasture. There is salvation in no other than Jesus Christ; and Jesus loves you, seeks you, and is ready to receive you. Go to him, just as you are, with all your sins and infirmities.

He alone can deliver you from them, and can heal you. He will sanctify and perfect you. Dedicate yourselves to him ! Whenever any of you die, may you die in Him ; and may I meet you, and accompany you with songs of triumph, in the mansions of felicity, before the throne of the Lamb !

“ Adieu, dear friends, adieu ! I have loved you much ; and even the severity which I have sometimes thought it necessary to exercise, has arisen from my earnest desire to contribute to your happiness.

“ May God reward you for your services, your good deeds, and the deference and submission which you have shown towards his poor unworthy servant. May he forgive those who have pained me by opposition. They, doubtless, knew not what they did.

“ O my God ! let thine eye watch over my dear parishioners ; let thine ear be open to hear them ; thine arm be extended to succour and protect them. Lord Jesus ! thou hast intrusted this parish to my care, feeble and miserable as I am. O, suffer me to commend it to thee, to resign it into thy hands. Give it pastors after thine own heart. Never for-

sake it. Overrule all things for its good. Enlighten them, guide them, love them, bless them all; and grant that the young and old, the teachers and the taught, pastors and parishioners, may all in due time meet together in thy paradise! Even so! Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!—even so, Amen!”

A discourse was then delivered from the texts which Oberlin had appointed for the purpose, viz. the first four verses of the 103d Psalm, “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.”—And the 14th verse of the 7th chapter of the book of Revelations: “And I said unto him, sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” A prayer and hymn followed, and the body was carried to the church-yard, where the grave was dug under the shade of a willow

which had been planted over the tomb of his son. Here an address was delivered by a German minister: a short eulogy was pronounced by a physician of the neighbourhood, and then, amidst the tears of the multitude, the remains of the pastor were committed to the grave.

In consequence of ill health, Mr. Graff, his son-in-law, had to leave the Ban, and remove with his family to Strasburg. Mr. Rauscher succeeded to Oberlin, and occupied his house at Waldbach, where Louisa Schepler probably still resides.

The schools, it should be remembered, were conducted by pious females, who undertook the business of instruction of their own accord, or by others who were paid by Oberlin. Most of the former having died, or become too old to attend to their duties, it has been found necessary to raise money for the support of teachers, and many benevolent persons in Europe have subscribed to raise a fund, which shall be sufficient to support them, which is to be called by the revered name of Oberlin. The persons who have interested themselves in this work, have made the following statement.

“We were, for a long time, undecided in our opinion respecting the best manner of employing the funds already collected. The example of our deceased friend, who always preferred utility to display, and the advice of some of the best informed inhabitants of the Ban de la Roche, who are extremely anxious to promote the institution of *conductresses*, have at length enabled us to come to a determination. It is to the enlargement and completion of this admirable institution, conceived at first by the late Mr. Stouber, and organized and brought into activity by Oberlin, that we intend to appropriate the funds already collected, and what may be in future received. For it is to this institution that the love of order and industry, those feelings of filial and fraternal piety, and that religious spirit by which the present generation in this interesting country is distinguished, are partly owing. We think, therefore, that no monument can be more worthy of bearing the name of our late excellent pastor, than an institution, in which he was so particularly interested, upon an enlarged scale. For the information of our readers we will give a slight sketch of this

institution. In each of the five villages and three hamlets entrusted to Oberlin's pastoral care, he placed a person of mature age, whom he denominated a *conductress*. It was her duty to assemble together all the children of the village, under seven years of age, once a week, for three or four hours, and to give them instruction. Having been herself previously initiated, through the kind assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Oberlin, in the branches of knowledge best adapted to the purpose, she taught the children by turns whatever appeared most suited to their respective age and capacity. The elder boys were taught to card wool and cotton, and the girls to spin, sew, and knit; even the youngest children were employed in picking cotton. During the hours of labour, their conductress related and explained to them such little stories from the Bible, or pleasing anecdotes in natural history, as were likely to suit their comprehension, and to direct their attention to the wise and superintending care of Providence, in the ordering of every event; to the beauty and harmony which reigns throughout his works; and to the affection and respect which they

ought to cherish towards their parents and superiors. She also taught them to chaunt and repeat hymns ; instructed them in the rudiments of botany, and gave them useful information on every subject likely to conduce to their advantage in future life.

“ The principles of love to God and devotedness to his service, and the germs of moral excellence thus early implanted in their hearts, proved of incalculable benefit to them as they grew up ; and their happiness became fixed on a basis which neither the storms nor vicissitudes of life had power to disturb.

“ The children, so far from being weary of these weekly meetings, listened with the deepest interest to the instructions they there received ; counted the days till their return, and were delighted with the thought of their approach. Having been thus prepared by early discipline, they were admitted, at the age of seven, into the higher schools ; where the elder girls assisted the conductresses in their labours, by teaching needlework, knitting, &c.

“ By the united labours of many individuals, this institution, so simple in its origin, became of incalculable advantage in the Ban

de la Roche, and excited and strengthened mutual good will, benevolence, and friendship, among the inhabitants of the district. There was, however, one great disadvantage attached to it. The poor conductresses, compelled to earn their own subsistence by the labours of their hands, could only afford to appropriate one day in the week to the purpose. In the interval that elapsed between the meetings, many of their instructions were consequently effaced from the minds of their little pupils, or, at least, the impression they had made at the time was in some degree obliterated. Great improvements were, nevertheless, certainly effected; and we are ready to suppose that the benefit would be exceedingly enhanced, if it were possible for the lessons to be repeated five or six times every week, with sufficient variations in the arrangement to prevent monotony.

“The scantiness of Oberlin’s pecuniary means did not allow him to carry on this mode of instruction to the extent he could have wished, although it was the object of his constant and earnest solicitude. Let us, therefore, endeavour to do so; and to crown

his labours, by putting into full execution those benevolent plans which his experience and knowledge of human nature led him to conceive. An annual salary of a hundred francs, for each of the conductresses, would allow the children to meet every day of the week. May we not hope for sufficient funds to cover their expense?

“The Ban de la Roche would then present the model of a simple village institution, of the greatest utility to the morality and well-being of its inhabitants. Such an example would not be lost upon the neighbouring districts. They would imitate it; and thus we should have the satisfaction of promoting an object in which our late beloved pastor took so peculiar an interest, and of raising a lasting monument to his memory.”

THE END.